

Confidential * * * * * Not for Publication

Nippur, January 11, 1961

If all goes well, I hope to write Newsletter No.- from Nippur itself.

First, please allow me to quote the two initial paragraphs of the news release datelined Afak, Iraq, December 1, 1960:

"There has been no comparable find in the last 25 years that has added so much to our knowledge of Sumerian art and sculpture," said Mr. Richard C. Haines, the field director of the expedition. "The find consists of more than 50 important pieces including ritual objects and temple gifts made of alabaster, lapis lazuli, marble, and limestone. More than half of the collection are statues of men and women; one is of a green translucent stone and a gold head (cf. under Nov. 27 and 28 in the detailed list which follows). Most of the statues are standing figures with hands clasped together in adoration of the deity; a few are seated. There are also ritual objects decorated with scenes of men and animals in low relief; small bases supported by sculptured bulls or birds; attachments for temple furniture ending in rams' and bulls' heads; and vases and bowls in alabaster and marble. One vase shows a fight between a snake and leopard in low relief."

This was the original release. You may wish to check it against any account which you have read in newspapers!

Second, from Carl's Report No. 3 dated December 3 come the following excerpts:

"During the last two weeks it has been increasingly apparent that it would be difficult to write this report without making it sound like a catalog of objects. They are many, varied, and in all gradations of preservation. The excellent pieces far outnumber any quantity we

would have considered adequate for a successful season. They all came from Level VII, a late version of the Early Dynastic II temple of Inanna.

"The excavation of Level VII has been completed (cf. Archaeology Vol. 12, No. 2, Summer 1959, p. 75, for the plan of a later level of the temple) except for rooms or open places east and west of the temple unit. The southern wall is exceptionally thick with buttresses on its exterior face. The runs between the buttresses are straight but each run is sufficiently out of line with those on either side that the effect is a curved wall. The obvious interpretation--a temple oval--could only be verified by further excavation. The western part of the temple was considerably expanded during this building period, but the circulation and layout of rooms remained essentially the same. At the beginning of Level VII the temple unit measured no more than 22 meters at its greatest width but, as far as we can determine, already was 91 meters in length. The walls, especially in the area of the sanctuaries were built upon projecting foundations three to five brick courses in depth. Below we have found the tops of a few of the Level VIII walls; they appear to be well-built and indicate a change in wall location if not a change in plan. We have started to tear out the Level VII walls and, in the libn debris immediately above one wall, we found fallen fragments of painted plaster still adhering to plano-convex bricks. The background is painted white. Above a black-bordered band of two registers of black lozenges outlined in red, there are feet and legs of animals, probably bulls, in black and red. There are many fragments and, since they were found only a few days ago, they have not been studied for further details....

"Comparatively few objects were found in situ in the rooms. This is not unusual since there was a continual build-up of floors, stands, and benches from the lowest floor to the preserved tops of the walls. Some objects were discarded and used as foundation material for features built during the occupation of the level; others, undoubtedly belonging to the next lower level, were found heaped together under the lowest floor; still others were found buried within the many plasterings of the tables and benches and must belong to a time just prior to the plaster coatings which covered them.

"Some of the major objects found during the last two weeks are:

Nov. 16. In the debris in a room just west of the cellae:

The lower part of a cylindrical stand with a leopard and snake contest in low relief. Both the snake and leopard have mother of pearl teeth, and bodies covered with inlaid spots of mother of pearl, and pink, white, and green stones. Red paint is still preserved in the open mouths of both. In the small part of an upper register that is preserved, it seems that the scene is repeated.

Nov. 17. In the same room mentioned above, several objects were built into a bitumen-covered construction:

One complete stone statue, 43 cm. high, preservation fair...

Feet and head of large stone statue, head 15 cm. high, preservation good.

Addorsed recumbent bearded stone bulls, heads missing, 11 cm. long...

Two vase fragments, one inscribed.

Nov. 26. In the southwest corner of the larger cella beneath the lowest floor:

Two stone female statues; one complete, 33 cm. high, preservation excellent; the other incomplete, 17 cm. high, preservation poor...

Three stone male statues, all more or less complete; heights 17 cm., 17 cm., and 13 cm., preservation fair.

Stone statuette of seated male and female with hands clasped in front and male's arm across shoulders of female, legs missing, 14 cm. high, preservation fair...

Stone vessel on back of human-faced bull ...

Nov. 27 and 28. In the plaster coatings of the bench at the west end of the larger cella:

Bronze male statuette with inset eyes, 24 cm. high...

Translucent green stone female statue with gold face mask (the head was made of wood now deteriorated), feet missing, 23 cm. high, preservation excellent...

Stone double vase-like vessel supported by four birds.

Black stone attachment with inscribed bull's head.

Four small stone vessels..."

A count based upon Carl's complete report shows that there are 8 almost complete statuettes; 14 statuettes are incomplete but of these 14 three have heads, and in addition there are 6 heads broken off the statuettes to which they originally belonged. Quite a discovery!

Third, from Carl's Report No. 5 dated January 1 (No. 4 is missing) comes the latest information:

"The excavation of Level VIII of the Inanna temple has been completed. It varies from 12 to 16 meters in width and is approximately 40 meters long. Apparently the structure continues northward beyond the excavated area but the only access to it, a doorway which shows little evidence of use, is blocked with well-laid libn and plastered over. What would logically be the main entrance from the street on

the east to a covered porch is similarly blocked and plastered. A second doorway in the east wall must have been the entrance with a small entry between it and the main courtyard.

"The covered porch with two wide openings flanked by heavy piers is on the north side of the courtyard. The porch, more than 4-1/2 meters deep and difficult to span, is provided with a single unbaked brick column in the center of the floor area. North of the porch there is only one small room with the blocked doorway in its west wall. The closing off of the rooms on the north unbalances the plan and makes the featured porch seem meaningless.

"The undecorated entrance to the sanctuary area is in the south wall of the courtyard. The two sanctuaries are similar to those in Level VII. The small one stands in an open courtyard and has an 'ante cella' and cella with a straight axis approach. The walls of the 'ante cella' are thin and no more than 45-80 cm. high; their rounded tops are well preserved. The benches against the walls are lower still and are divided into sections by narrow, shallow channels placed at a right angle to the walls. The typical rectangular cella has a bent-axis approach.

"A secondary access to the sanctuary area is provided through a room flanking the courtyard on the west and a corridor along the west wall. The corridor also leads to a rear courtyard which has a doorway opening to the street on the west side of the temple. Service rooms east and south of the courtyard complete the plan. The south wall of the temple is, in part, abutted by the walls of another building.

"We are now tearing down the walls of Level VIII and tracing those of Level IX. Too little of Level IX has been uncovered to indicate a plan; the walls do not underlie those above but the orientation seems about the same.

"Only a few objects were found in the Level VIII temple. A Jamdat Nasr cylinder seal and the many beads in the form of birds and animals were mentioned in the last report. The bench, corresponding to the one in Level VII which contained so many objects, yielded nothing but a large bag of shells. None of the bowls are inscribed and mother of pearl inlays are infrequent. Other significant finds are three small plaques. Two are in three registers with only part of the top register preserved; the other one is complete with an open field around a square hole. In all three plaques, the iconography and style are different than those found in Level VII"

--Richard C. Haines
Field Director